[Mr. A. S. Damodaran Asan.]

According to the scheme of the Bar Council Bill, it will be found that after the Bill comes into force, that is, after Clauses 8—16 are brought into effect the Bar Council will have to prescribe rules with the previous approval of the High Court and examinations have to be conducted by them. It is only after that, that advocates could be enrolled. With regard to the persons who had a right to practise in the High Court before the date on which Section 8 comes into force, they can be enrolled as advocates. But the subsequent enrolment has to wait until the Bar Council prescribes rules and after they come into force proper examinations have to be held for enrolment. Necessarily a long period will have to elapse during which time the enrolment as advocates has to be suspended. Under Clause 8 persons eligible to be enrolled as advocates but are not yet High Court Vakils, will have no right to practise even in subordinate courts until they are enrolled as advocates. In addition to the persons who want to join the profession of law, there are persons who are already in that profession, who will also be disabled under Section 8. It is not right that persons, who are desirous to become advocates, should be asked to wait until the rules under Clause 9 (1) are brought into effect. So, all that I wish to convey by this amendment is to give power to the High Court to enroll advocates, until the rules under sub-section 9 (1) are brought into effect. With these words I move the amendment for the acceptance of the House.

PRESIDENT: As the time is 3.30 we will now proceed to the discussion of the adjournment motion.

ADJOURNMENT MOTION.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE.

MR. POTTAYIL S. KRISHNA PANICKAR (*Shertala II*): Sir, I move the following motion:

> "I beg leave to move the adjournment of the business of the Assembly for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely the unsatisfactory nature of the arrangements for the conduct of election to the legislative bodies as disclosed by the recent publication of the preliminary electoral roll and the fixing of the polling stations."

I may say at the outset that even though the motion I have moved is comprehensive enough to include the electoral roll in respect of the elections to both the Houses of Legislature, I shall confine myself particularly to the election and the arrangements proposed to be made with respect to the elections to the Sri Chitra S ate Council.

MR. S. J. NAIR (*Nedumangad*): May I know the special reason which prompts the member to discuss that aspect of the question alone?

MR. POTTAYIL S. KRISHNA PANICKAR (*Shertala II*): As a respectable voter to the Sri Chitra State Council and as a member of this Assembly I think even apart from the question of any special interest that

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I may have, I am entitled to make a motion of this kind. On a passing glance of the electoral rolls now published both for the Assembly and for the State Council elections, it will be apparent that the elections to both the Houses are to be conducted on two different days.

Sir, that is a state of affairs which is unsatisfactory both from the point of view of Government and from the point of view of the voters and the candidates. When the reformed Legislatures were constituted in 1108 the elections to both the Houses were conducted on one and the same day, and the same polling stations were fixed for both the Assembly and the Council. Now, it is proposed that elections to the Assembly and to the State Council should be conducted on different days. It is a process which is more costly to Government. If they have to appoint Polling and Presiding Officers and to make sufficient Police arrangements for the conduct of the State Council election over and above the arrangements for the Assembly elections, it will surely entail additional expense. From the point of view of the voter, the State Council voter is *ipso facto* an Assembly voter. By the present arrangements he is called upon to attend the polling station and record his vote on two days. I submit, this arrangement is unnecessary and an additional burden is thus cast upon the State Council voter. Then as for the candidate in the new scheme of things, the State Council constituencies have been so extended or enlarged as to include three and four taluks and some of the constituencies extend to a length of more than 100 miles. Three and even four taluks are grouped together and the voters are asked to elect one or more members. As far as I am aware no constituency is permitted to elect more than one member from the general constituency. No one candidate can be expected to possess sufficient influence in all the taluks of his constituency alike. Under these circumstances, the inducement for the voter to go to the polling station and record his vote, is very limited. Ordinarily speaking, in the absence of any political party or organisation in the country to control and organise this kind of election, the election depends more or less entirely upon the individual efforts. The candidates will have to run about, in four or more taluks during a short period, and it will be impossible to induce all the voters, by legitimate means, to record their votes. Sir, to compensate for this inconvenience I submit that sufficient and reasonable facilities should be afforded to the voters to go to the polling stations and record their votes. As for that it will be evident from the preliminary electoral rolls that four and more *pakuthies* are grouped together and one polling station allotted to them. Voters are called upon to travel in some cases more than 16 and 18 miles to and fro to record their votes. I am submitting that from a careful study of the electoral rolls it will be apparent that more than 25 per cent. of the voters are females and a sufficiently large number of the male voters are persons who have passed their middle age. And the elections come off in the hottest part of the year somewhere during the middle of Medam. To expect these voters to walk in the hot sun a distance of more than 16

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[Pottayil S. Krishna Panickar.]

or 18 miles to record their votes is very hard. It is almost an impossible task. If necessary and sufficient facilities are not given, the percentage of voters, who vote will be very poor even though Travancore claims to be one of the most enlightened country and the people are supposed to be most alive to their civic responsibilities.

MR. A. EASWARA PILLAI (*Kalkulam II*): May I know whether the dates for the State Council election have been fixed ?

MR. POTTAYIL S. KRISHNA PANICKAR (*Shertala I*): I have no authoritative information as to the dates of the elections. Yesterday, I saw in some papers, that the Assembly election is to be conducted on the 16th, and the State Council election on the 21st of Medam. That is all the information I have. In order to obviate these difficulties, my proposal is that all the polling stations of the Assembly should be made the polling stations of the State Council as well. By doing so, the number of polling stations will be increased and the voters will not have the necessity of walking very great distances. And to the Government that will obviate the additional expenditure necessary for the conduct of two elections for the two legislative bodies on two different dates. Sir, there are not sufficient number of public passenger conveyances; as such the distance between the polling stations should, as far as possible, be so short that voters can conveniently go and exercise their votes. If the Assembly polling stations are used for the State Council elections also, then the distance will be minimised and no voter will be put to the necessity of walking more than 5 or 6 miles. That will be a sufficient inducement for the voter to go and record his vote. So I submit that both the elections should be conducted on one and the same date and all the Assembly polling stations should be used as polling stations for the State Council election also. In this connection, I may be permitted to say that, if my suggestion is found impracticable for any reason, my submission is that additional polling stations must be allotted for the State Council elections. By that I mean to say that at least one polling station must be established for every *pakuthi*. I make this request with special reference to one State Council constituency *viz.*, the Karunagapalli Kartikapalli Ambalapuzh constituency. From a reading of the voters' list it appears that these lists are prepared without any reference to any principle whatsoever. Kartikapalli is a taluk just as big as Karunagapalli, and the number of voters slightly bigger than that of Karunagapalli. In Karunagapalli taluk there are 12 polling stations one for each *pakuthi* whereas in the Kartikapalli taluk, there are only 5 polling stations to serve 754 voters and 17 *pakuthies*. In some of the polling stations in the Karunagapalli taluk the number of voters is below 50 and in one case it is below twenty whereas in the Kartikapalli taluk, no polling station serves less than 100 voters. The difficulty of travelling in both the taluks is the same. There is only one central road connecting both the taluks. There is no public passenger conveyance in all parts of the taluks. The polling arrangements in Kartikapalli is highly inadequate and unsatisfactory.

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Coming to my own taluk Shertala, which is well known to be the most illserved taluk in the State in the matter of means of communication, with the loose burning sand, for 15 *pakuthies* there are only 8 polling stations. The area to be served is almost the same if not slightly more than that of Karunagapalli. For a voter to go from Panavally to Arukutty he has to walk 18 miles, and more than 25 per cent. of the voters are women. To expect them to walk great distances is nothing but an impossibility. So, I submit that the matter may be looked into carefully by the Government and sufficient number of polling stations established to conduct the State Council election. Even though it may entail a certain amount of additional expenditure and a little delay in republishing the list, it will be to the advantage of the voters. I request that this matter should not be brushed aside simply because it has once been disposed of by the Government. In one instance, a certain portion of Alleppey *pakuthi*, being beyond the jurisdiction of the Municipality, the voters are asked to pass along two polling stations on the way and to go to a distance of 6 miles. They might as well have been included in the polling stations within the Municipality, or a separate polling station might have been provided for them. This matter requires urgent looking into, and I earnestly appeal to the Government to bestow their serious consideration. With these words, I commend the motion to the acceptance of the House.

MR. A. EASWARA PILLAI (*Kalkulam II*): May I know whether it is the member's view that the polling for the Assembly and the Council should be conducted on the very same day?

MR. POTTAYIL S. KRISHNA PANICKAR (*Shertala II*): That was exactly what I said even at the begining.

MR. K. R. ELENKATH (*Kalkulam I*): I rise to support the motion. The main consideration in fixing the date of election ought to be the convenience of the public, economy to the State, and also to the voters and the candidates. I do not find what it was that led the Government to take this different course of action from the election of 1108. I very well remember that the election on that occasion went very smoothly and that both the voters and the candidates found it convenient to take part in the election. Unless the experience of the previous election has made it necessary for the Government to make an alteration in the way in which they have now thought it fit, I do not see why they should have decided to change from that course of action. In a State like Travancore where waste of money in such elections is so much, considering the economic condition of the people, I think Government should be very keen in seeing that the least amount of money is spent from the pockets either of the candidates or the voters, especially because there is no common fund from which the candidates can draw for their election expenses. The other point which Mr. Panickar stressed very well was that convenience should be given to voters as far as possible. And if the best facilities are given to the voters, generally the constituency will be able to return the best man.

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[Mr. K. R. Elenkath.]

The success of the candidate elected depends upon the proportion of the votes polled. So, as far as possible, Government should give convenience to get recorded as many votes as possible, and for that a greater number of polling stations should be established. The greater the number of polling stations the more will be the number of voters attracted, to the polling stations. One point ought to be borne in mind. All the voters of the State Council are voters of the Assembly as well. That is a fact which Government ought to consider. Is it not very hard to ask a voter to go to the polling station twice risking all his professional duties and wasting his time. If the polling is to take place on the same day for both the Houses of Legislature that inconvenience can be minimised. With these words, I strongly support the motion.

SADASYA TILAKA T. K. VELU PILLAI (*Trivandrum—Urban*): I also rise to support the motion. I am doing so not for all the reasons advanced by Mr. Krishna Panickar. He said that the constituencies had been arranged in a slipshod manner.

MR. POTTAYIL S. KRISHNA PANICKAR (*Shertala II*): I never said any such thing about the constituencies. What I said was about the polling stations.

SADASYA TILAKA T. K. VELU PILLAI (*Trivandrum—Urban*): In regard to polling stations, so far as I know, a certain plan has been followed in fixing them. I do not want to speak for or against any particular officer; but in this instance, Sir, I may say that the Electoral officer is one who knows the country thoroughly, especially the Ambalapuzha, Shertala, and Kartikapalli taluks. I want to stress this point because there is considerable force in the merits of the question. Taking into consideration the fact that only a very few voters are likely to go to the polling stations unless proper facilities are afforded to them, there is force in the contention of Mr. Panickar that as far as possible these voters must not be put to any serious inconvenience, especially because about 25 per cent of the total number of voters to the Council are women. In this country, Sir, women are highly patriotic and though they may be ready at the risk of personal inconvenience, to go to distant polling stations, our habit of chivalry should not tolerate that. It is very hard to expect women to walk long distances in those sandy places like Pallippuram and the adjoining localities in the whole of the Shertala taluk, in the hot days of the month of Medam, to record their votes. Further, if the voter takes the trouble to vote at the elections to the Assembly, that, after three or four days he or she should be expected to go again to the polling booth in order to send representatives to the Council is very hard on them. Sir, I do not want to draw any invidious distinction between the Assembly and the Council; but it is a fact that the number of voters to the Assembly is much larger than the number of voters to the Council. Therefore I think it will be very feasible to conduct both the elections on the same day and in the same polling stations, the same officer

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managing both the elections in the same polling station. Sir, Mr. Panickar said that, in this country communications are scanty. I think Sir, I must take exception to that statement. I can tell him and the House that there is no other Indian State which has a greater length of roads and canals than our State has, considering the total extent of the country. At the same time, the conveniences now asked for, for the voters, are very necessary. With these words, I support the motion.

MR. P. C. KURIYAN (*Kottayam I*): I support the motion. If the elections to the Council and to the Assembly were to take place on the same day it will add much to the convenience of the voters. I take this opportunity to request the Government that the date to be fixed for the election should not fall on religious days, for instance during the Passion Weeks. There are two Passion Weeks. One is important for the Anglicans and the other for the Jacobites.

PRESIDENT: Does the member know the dates?

MR. P. C. KURIYAN (*Kottayam I*): No, Sir. I would also suggest that what was done in British India *viz.*, the provision of separate boxes for the various candidates with a view to simplify the work of the voter may be followed here also.

MR. S. CHATTANATHA KARAYALAR (*Shencotta*): Sir, I rise to support the motion before the House. Mr. Panickar referred to certain inconveniences and difficulties in the way of the electors coming from distant places to the polling stations. I wish to make one or two observations in that matter. It should be made possible for any elector to reach a polling station by travelling not more than five miles. This was the principle followed in British India during the recent elections in fixing polling stations. Mr. Panickar also suggested that a polling station should be established in every *pakuthi*. That need not necessarily be done; because it may be possible to group together a few *pakuthies* for one polling station without the voters being obliged to walk or travel more than 5 miles to reach the polling stations. Another suggestion I would like to make is that wherever there are a sufficient number of women voters, women Polling Officers should be appointed to record the votes of women voters.

A third suggestion which I want to make is that in no circumstance, a Polling Officer should be called upon to handle more than 600 or 700 voters. That is the maximum that one can handle. With these observations, I support the motion.

MR. N. ABDUR RAHIMAN SAHIB (*Nominated*): In supporting the motion, I wish to emphasise the point referred to by Mr. Karayalar, *viz.*, that adequate facilities should be provided for having separate polling booths to enable women voters to come and record their votes and that women Polling Officers should be appointd. If that is done, it will be possible for a larger number of women to freely exercise their franchise. The other day I read in a newspaper that, in Malabar out of 23 polling stations 9 were entirely set apart for women voters.

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[Mr. M. Abdur Rahiman Sahib].

This fact has been repeatedly urged here, and the need has been emphasised more than once that there must be sufficient facility to enable all women including *purdah* ladies to come and record their votes.

MR. A. S. DAMODARAN ASAN (*Mavelikara*): May I know whether if separate polling stations are established for women, they would walk long distances to record their votes?

MR. N. ABDUR RAHIMAN SAHIB (*Nominated*): As far as possible, every possibile arrangement should be made to cut short the distance to the polling booths, so that a larger number of voters can come and record their votes.

MR. K. PADMANABHAN (*Chirayinkil I*): May I know whether Muslim ladies would come and record their votes if lady Polling Officers are appointed?

MR. N. ABDUR RAHIMAN SAHIB (*Nominated*): Yes, I think so.

MR. EDAVANATT S. PADMANABHA MENON (*Shertala I*): Some of the members of this House who are experts in wooing the electorate feel helpless to approach the newly constituted constituencies. They are so unwieldy in extent that the most optimistic of us feel helpless. Taluks and localities which have nothing in common have been grouped together; and votes that one candidate has to canvass have been increased to such an extent that one cannot think of any election work except the announcement of his candidature. One of my friends humorously remarked that by the time the candidate finishes canvassing for one election he would have to begin canvassing for the next election. He was not wrong. My friend Mr. Panickar has already said that the present arrangements for polling are very inadequate. I will just bring to the notice of this House one instance. The taluks of Kartikapalli, Karunagapalli, Ampalapuzha and Shertala are grouped together as a single constituency for the State Council election and Ambalapuzha and Shertala as one constituency for the Assembly. In the Ambalapuzha taluk though there are 18 *pakuthies*, there are only 4 polling stations for the State Council. It is a matter of common knowledge that the major portion of the Ambalapuzha taluk consists of water-logged areas and that if a person wants to visit his next door neighbour, he will have to go in a small canoe. Travelling in these parts is extremely difficult, and it is strange that the Electoral Special Officer who himself belongs to the Ambalapuzha taluk has given to this taluk only 4 polling stations. That is practically denying polling facilities to the majority of the State Council voters in the Ambalapuzha taluk. The distance to be covered between the various polling stations is, in many cases more than 15 miles. That is one of the reasons which will induce most of the voters to keep away from the pollingbooth. Facilities should be given to attract the maximum number of voters to exercise their franchise.

The other aspect put forward by Mr. Panickar is the advisability of conducting the elections for both the Houses simultaneously. But there is some difficulty in regard to that, owing to the grouping of the

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constituencies. It may not be possible to condut the elections to the State Council and to the Assembly on the same day, throughout the State. But I think there is nothing to prevent Government from making arrangements to have the votes recorded for the State Council also, in those places where the Assembly elections are held as was done in the past in the case of the Commerce and Industry constituency.

MISS HEPZIBAH GNANASIKAMONY (*Nominated*) : Sir, I support the motion before the House. I am for election on the same date, but I am not for separate election for ladies. That is not necessary in our State. Further it will be very expensive. Just now it had been pointed out through the answer to a question that even Muslim ladies are prepared to vote. That being the desire of Muslim ladies, I request Government to appoint lady Polling Officers in stations where a large number of Muslim ladies have to record their votes and also in stations where ladies are not forward and need such a help. Sir, this is done in British India and I hope it can be done here as well.

Another thing; more privacy should be provided for Muslim ladies in the polling halls so that they may be able to record their votes without being seen by men.

RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*) : At the very outset I may say that the dates for polling have not yet been definitely fixed. The Special Officer has sent up his recommendation, but Government have not yet passed final orders. I believe, in making the recommendation, the Special Officer has taken into consideration the objection raised by Mr. Kuriyan. He has suggested three dates, 14th and 16th of Medam for election to the Assembly, and the 21st Medam for election to the State Council. Originally, his idea was to have elections on other dates but owing to the Easter falling on those days he has changed them. Government will examine the dates now recommended in the light of what Mr. Kuriyan has stated.

It has been suggested that the pollings may take place on the same dates, both for the Assembly and for the Council. I am sorry to say that it is an impracticable proposition. In 1108 the polling for both the Houses took place on the same dates. At that time, the number of voters for the Assembly was only about 1,50,000. Now, with the widening of the franchise, the number of voters stands at 5,10,000. At the last election, there were, on the whole, 399 polling stations for the Assembly and the Council. The maximum number of votes for each polling station is fixed at 800 for the ensuing elections. For the last election it was 600 and this figure would have been adopted for the elections if it had been possible to do so

MR. A. THANU PILLAI (*Trivandrum—Rural*) : Is it the average number of voters for each polling station ?

RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*) : 600 is the average number and 800 is the maximum.

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MR. A. S. DAMODARAN ASAN (*Mavelikara*): What was the maximum fixed last time?

RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*): It was somewhere about 600.

With 800 voters for each polling station, there must be 799 or nearly 800 polling stations for the Assembly against 400 at the last election. If you are going to have both the elections on the same day, there will be 800 polling stations for the Assembly and the Council. The difficulty here is, first of all, to find an adequate number of suitable persons to serve as Polling Officers and Presiding Officers. Last time for nearly 400 polling stations Government had to engage about 1,600 officers. Besides these, there were special Presiding and Polling Officers for the special constituencies. For each polling station there were four officers, two Polling Officers and two Presiding Officers. There was considerable difficulty in finding a sufficient number of these officers on the last occasion. Government had to appoint officers on Rs 50 and even lower grade clerks drawing Rs 20 and Rs. 25 as Polling and Presiding Officers. That was in 1108, when the number of officers required was only 1,600.

MR. K. R. ELENKATH (*Kalkulam I*): Cannot one and the same officer act for both the Assembly and the Council by providing two boxes, one for the Assembly and the other for the Council?

RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*): But the box for the Assembly is different from the box for the Council. There must be one officer for each box. There will be practical difficulties if one officer was put in charge of both the boxes. Government do not want to inconvenience the public. They have considered all aspects very carefully; and as it is not possible to find a sufficient number of officers to serve as Polling and Presiding Officers, it has been decided not to have the elections to both the Houses on the same dates.

SADASYA TILAKA T. K. VELU PILLAI (*Trivandrum Urban*): Is there any rule that only officers should be appointed as Polling Officers?

RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*): The difficulty will be greater to find suitable non-officials. Even in 1108, there was difficulty in finding sufficient number of Polling and Presiding offieers. Now we require double that number; and if the elections to both the Houses were to take place on the same day.....

MR. K. PADMANABHAN (*Chirayinkil I*): In British India, non-officials are appointed as Polling Officers.

RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*): Sir, we have no objection to appoint non-officials, if we can find competent non-officials. There is the practical difficulty of finding a sufficient number of hands to conduct the polling for both the Assembly and the Council on the same day, as suggested by Mr. Panickar and some others.

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Then, Sir, honourable members seem to think that, by the present arrangement, Government have to incur large expenditure. I am afraid it is the other way. Take the cost of the boxes alone. If the elections were to take place on the same day about 3,200 boxes would be required. But in 1108 the polling was managed with 1568 boxes; 800 boxes for the Assembly and 768 boxes for the Council. The Special Officer calculates the price of each box at Rs. 4. The saving that can be effected is, therefore, nearly Rs. 6,500. This is a considerable amount which need not be wasted.

MR. POTTAYIL S. KRISHNA PANICKAR (*Shertala II*) : May I know whether the size of the boxes should be uniform in all cases and whether they could not be made smaller, and therefore cheaper?

RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*) : The size of the boxes has not been considered. The Special Officer says that the cost of one box will be Rs. 4. Besides this saving, honourable members may also consider the practical difficulty of finding enough men to serve as Polling and Presiding Officers.

Regarding the special request made by Mr. Panickar, whether the polling is to take place on the same day or not, the difficulties of his own constituency may be considered and something may be done to minimise them, Sir, I know Shertala well. It is a sandy place where walking long distances in the hot sun is an ordeal. This time Government issued instructions as was done on the last occasion that the distance from one polling station to another should not be more than six miles. No voter will have to walk more than six miles to record his vote. That was the instruction issued in 1108 also. The Special Officer has so arranged the stations that a voter will not have to cover a longer distance than six miles. Mr. Krishna Panickar says that in some places, the voter has to walk about eighteen miles for recording his vote. I do not know which place it is. Here is the statement of the Special Officer that the polling stations have been so arranged that no elector will be obliged to walk more than six miles.

MR. A. THANU PILLAI (*Trivandrum—Rural*) : May I know whether the Government will be pleased to consider representations for the shifting of polling stations?

RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*) : I am coming to that.

Regarding the request of Mr. Panickar that the polling stations for his constituency may be increased, I may say that there are eight stations for the Shertala constituency. I do not think that I can give an undertaking, without looking into the matter, that the number will be increased. The rules have been published, the stations have been fixed and the notifications have appeared in the Gazette. I am told that a certain period is allowed for filing objections before the Returning officers. It is the Returning officer that has to hear objections and reallot polling booths or increase their number.

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MR. POTTAYIL S. KRISHNA PANICKAR (*Shertala II*): The Returning officer has to hear objections only with regard to the voters' list. He has nothing to do with the polling booths.

RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*): That is not my information. There is the Returning officer and also the Registration officer. The latter fixes the polling area and the Returning officer fixes the polling stations and objections about polling stations have to be filed before him. I do not know whether under the rules we can go back upon the notifications already published. If there is any possibility by which that can be done, the complaint raised by Mr. Krishna Panickar will be looked into. But I cannot give an undertaking until the matter has been examined by the Law Officers.

In regard to the dates of polling, I can say positively that it is impossible to have the polling on the same day for both the Assembly and the Council.

MR. A. S. DAMODARAN ASAN (*Mavelikara*): What about reducing the number of votes for each poliing station as suggested by Mr. Karayalar?

RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*): We have fixed 800 as the maximum and 600 as the average for each polling station. If it is further reduced we would require more polling stations.

MR. S. CHATTANATHA KARAYALAR (*Shencotta*): May I know whether it will be possible for 800 voters to vote in one station the same day?

RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*): It may be possible.

MR. P. C. KURIYAN (*Kottayam I*): May I know whether it will be possible to allot separate boxes for each candidate as in British India?

RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*): I do not think it is possible to do so.

MR. N. ABDUR RAHIMAN SAHIB (*Nominated*): What about the giving of facilities for women voters?

RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*): I do not know whether my friend wants separate polling stations for women, all over the country or only in places where there may be a large number of *purdha* women. If he wants separate polling stations for women all over the State, I may say that it is impossible. In regard to the second point, if it is possible to have separate polling stations for women in particular localities, it will be considered.

MR. A. S. DAMODARAN ASAN (*Mavelikara*): Sir, I wish to say a word or two on this motion. The voting has to take place within ten hours. Ten hours mean 600 minutes. Anyone who has experience of the time usually taken for recording a vote will admit that not less than one and a half or two minutes will be required to record a single vote.

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Some of us who have experience of voting can assert that we have very often experienced difficulties in getting votes recorded within the time allotted. The maximum number of voters fixed on the last occasion was 600. Now it has been raised to 800. I sympathize with the difficulties of Government in finding sufficient number of officers to conduct the elections. But the Government are expected to give necessary facilities to the voters to go and record their votes. When difficulties were experienced even when the average was 600 the Government can more or less imagine the difficulties that will be experienced when the average is raised to 800. Government can know from the Returning Officers who served at the previous elections the difficulties experienced by the voters in recording their votes within the time allotted. On previous occasions in certain centres there were demands for increasing the number of Polling Officers. In certain cases the Returning Officers complied with the request. So, I would suggest that it is absolutely necessary that the maximum number of voters in a polling station be brought down. The voters have to be identified, and if they are illiterate their votes will have to be recorded by the Presiding Officers. All these will necessarily take time. There will be no good complaining against the Polling Officers, on that day. We cannot get the defects rectified on the spot. There is no good in finding fault with the Polling Officers for not doing the whole work in time. I would also suggest that in fixing the polling stations the convenience of the voters must be ascertained. I have seen in a number of places that two portions of the same building are chosen for two polling stations. That should not be done. The polling stations should be in the centre of the polling area. The stations should be fixed so as to suit the convenience of the voters concerned. With these words, I support the motion.

MR. POTTAYIL S. KRISHNA PANICKAR (*Shertala II*) : Sir, I was very patiently hearing what the Chief Secretary said. He said that there were practical difficulties in conducting the elections on one and the same day. With regard to the statement of the Chief Secretary that polling stations once fixed cannot be changed, I may say that there are instances in which polling stations once fixed have been changed. My request once again is that this matter may be sympathetically and reasonably looked into and sufficient number of polling stations given.

I may say at the outset that the distance of six miles fixed, is not adhered to in practice. The distance between Poochakkal *thodu* the southern boundary of Panavallil *pakuthi* and Arukutty is not less than eight miles. The distance from the Thrikunnapuzha beach to Karuvatta English School the present polling station is very much more than 6 miles. I regret very much to note the unsympathetic attitude taken by the Government in the matter of even increasing the number of polling stations. Unless I have more sympathetic response and an assurance that all that could be done will be done I am afraid I will have to press the motion to a division.

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RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*) : May I add a word, Sir. I have stated definitely that if the rules permit it Government will look into the complaints. If it is found that the polling area in a particular locality is far too much, and if under the rules the number of polling stations can be increased Government will have no objection to consider it. I have specifically stated in regard to the Shertala taluk that it is a very difficult place and that Government will look into the possibility of increasing the number of polling stations there.

MR. POTTAYIL S. KRISHNA PANICKAR (*Shertala II*) : On the assurance now given by the Chief Secretary I withdraw the motion.

The motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

The House adjourned at 4·28 P. M.

P. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI,
Secretary to the Sri Mulam Assembly.

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